

BY THE SANDPAPER NEWS TEAM

# BITS & BITSAA NEWS

**May 24, 2004:** BITS Pilani and Berkeley-educated Congress MP **Prithviraj Chavan** was sworn in as the Minister of State for Finance, assisting PM Manmohan Singh.

**April 28, 2004:** The Wharton Business School's Annual Business Plan competition was won by **Sammonoi Banerjee** and his team for development of the handheld Brain Trauma Detector. Sammonoi received \$20,000 for his effort and has received funding from the Navy. The company is Infrscan, Inc.



**April 19, 2004:** **Dr. Kishan Baheti**, 1968 graduate of BITS, crossed the finishline of the grueling Boston Marathon with an amazing finishing time of 3 hours and 52 minutes. Baheti completed the 26.2 mile race in the top 30% of the 16,000-runner field. Boston Marathon has a tradition of attracting the top runners in the world where each runner is admitted based on qualifying times of a previous marathon within last two years. Baheti qualified to compete in Boston by finishing the 2003 Washington DC Marine Corps

Marathon in three and a half hours. Dr. Baheti is a program Director in the Division of Electrical and Communications Systems at the National Science Foundation in Washington DC.

**April 17, 2004:** Kenya names Mr. **Goenka**, a graduate of BITS Pilani and founder of ITPC, a Rs 200-crore export house in Kenya, as honorary counsel in India to develop business relations with Kenya.

**April 16, 2004:** **Indira P. Raman**, (1998 Chemical) joined XLRI in 2002 and graduated this year with a Gold medal in marketing. She has joined Colgate Palmolive.

**April 15, 2004:** **B Murali Krishna** is contesting the AP elections for the Bahujan Samaj Party from the Himayatnagar Assembly seat. "I've come to develop my city. To show that NRIs like me are capable of contributing more than anyone else for its development," asserts Murali Krishna. Now for Krishna's track record. He was born in Tenali, Guntur. He did his BTech from Bits Pilani, MTech from IIT, Chennai and MBA from IIM Bangalore.

**April 2, 2004:** **Anurag Jain** ('88), Founder of Vision Healthsource and Brigade was appointed Head of the Business Process Solutions Group at Perot Systems, a \$200 million division. Anurag sold Vision Healthsource to Perot for \$10 million earlier this year.

**April 5, 2004:** **Srinivas Balasubramanian** (Founder, Infravio) raised a new round of \$6 million round last week from strategic investors NetiQ (Nasdaq : NTIQ) and other venture backers. This is in addition to the \$6.2 million that was raised last year, after an earlier \$7 million raised in 2000.

**April 3, 2004:** Bharat Forge, founded by **Baba Kalyani**, BITSian, joins a growing number of leading Indian companies to offer a BITS Pilani degree. The programme which will be conducted at BFL will primarily enable BITS to offer a degree course equivalent to BE/ B Tech to Kalyani Group employees. The employees will have a full-time student status and the degree awarded will be valid for applying for higher education in any other university. This three-year-six semester course consists of 20 subjects spread over first five semesters and project work for the sixth semester.

**April 1, 2004:** Chola Asset Management Company named **Sashi Krishnan** as their new Chief Executive Officer.

**March 23, 2004:** The University of Buffalo reported that a team led by **Prof. Abani Patra** has invented a pump to be used in a device that may help



revolutionize the

decontamination and purification of water, juices, and other liquids. Patra is an

associate professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering in the UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. He graduated with a degree in Mech from BITS in 1987.



**March 1, 2004:** Two BITSians, **Mithun Paul**, 2000B5A1588 and **Ganesh Ramachandran**, 2001B5A3586, came second in the National Level Finals of the Awakening Indians to India Quiz, conducted by the Chinmaya Mission. They got through many rounds including the State level, Zonal level and went on to become the runners up in National finals, beating around almost 345,000 participants who appeared for the first round of the quiz from all over India. They won a cash award of Rs.90,000/- and a fully sponsored one month All India Trip. They have also won a dinner with Dr.A.P.J Abdul Kalam, the Hon: President of India. The quiz which is being aired on Zee TV in 13 episodes, is being mentioned in the Guinness Book of World Records for being the largest Quiz ever conducted.

**March 1, 2004:** **Rakesh Ranjan** ('93 PhD), Senior Lecturer at Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Multimedia University Malaysia has been nominated for Marquis WHO'S WHO IN THE WORLD (USA) 2004 for his research contribution in the area of "Radial Distribution Systems". Dr. Rakesh has co-authored three books entitled "Signals and Systems" published by McGraw-Hill, Singapore / Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, India, "Random Process and Queuing Theory"

published by Pearson, Prentice Hall, Malaysia and "Circuits and Signals" published by Pearson, Prentice Hall, Malaysia. His research interests are operation, control and planning of Distribution system with the application of fuzzy logic, genetic algorithm and genetic programming etc. He has contributed so far, 17 research papers in international journals and 35 papers at international conferences.

**February 24, 2004:** **Ramesh Ramanathan:** "Practical patriotism is what we need." Times of India carried an article on Ramesh Ramanathan and Janagraha on Tuesday, February 24th. Ramesh Ramanathan who "chucked up a career as a banking star to start a good governance project".

**January 22, 2004:** **Prof Krishna Saraswat** was named the Rickey/Nielsen Chair in the School of Engineering at Stanford University. He had earlier received the 2004 IEEE Andrew S. Grove Award for seminal contributions to silicon process technology. Dr. Saraswat has also previously received the Electrochemical Society's Thomas D. Callinan Award and two gold medals for undergraduate excellence while attending BITS Pilani. He is the author or co-author of more than 400 technical papers and is the recipient of several Best Paper Awards.

**January 21, 2004:** **Kalpana Nayak** ('90 BE Comp Science) is the Commandant of the first all-women



battalion of TN police profiled in

NewsToday. On January 31, J Jayalalithaa, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu commissioned India's first All Women Police Battalion, led by Kalpana Nayak ('90 BE Comp Science). Part of her job is to provide commando training to over 1000 women police officers in TN.



Credit: College of W&M

**January 15, 2004:** Associate Professor **Ram Ganeshan** ('86) was named the co-winner of this year's Wickham Skinner Award for Early Career Research Accomplishment. Bestowed each year by the Production and Operations Management Society (POMS), the award recognizes young scholars – those who have received and/or begun their academic careers in the previous five years – with unusually strong research records and reputations.

To be considered for the internationally recognized POMS award, Ganeshan submitted a portfolio detailing his research and demonstrating its contribution to academia. The latter requirement certainly wasn't difficult: Ganeshan is one of, if not the first, to concentrate research efforts on the use of digital technology to enhance the efficiency of supply chains.

**January 15, 2004:** BITSian combines e-tailing with network marketing, profiled in Business Standard.

**Vishal Anand**, a 32-year-old BITS Pilani computer science graduate says that his

dotcom venture Mahamaza Ecomm Ltd not only stayed afloat but grew into an Rs 80 crore company in the last three years. By selling the products through a chain of network marketing agents (like Tupperware) to customers in small towns - not metros.

**January 12, 2004:** Wipro Vice Chairman **Vivek Paul** has been named as one of the best managers in the world for the year 2003 by BusinessWeek in its latest issue dated January 12, 2004. Paul has been listed alongside Apple boss Steve Jobs, NBC chairman Bob Wright, Craig Barret of Intel and Starbucks CEO Orin Smith. BusinessWeek praised the Mountain View, California-based Wipro vice chairman for taking Wipro from a \$150 million company to a \$1 billion giant; and for his strategy of growth by acquisition is helping Wipro steal business from the likes of IBM Global and Accenture.

**January 10, 2004:** BITSIAN leads the software team that lands a spaceship on Mars. Computer engineer **Kanna Rajan** ('84) team that developed the software for Spirit. For Rajan's years of hard work, the moment of truth was when Spirit rolled off the lander platform. The Rover will drive around the planet and scoop up rocks for experiments, guided by the software that Rajan and his colleagues developed. Rajan is the second Indian from the University of Texas to hit the headlines in recent times. The first was the late astronaut, Kalpana Chawla. Kanna Rajan is a member of the Planning and Scheduling group at NASA Ames Research Center. He holds a BE (Hons) Computer Science from the Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani, India and a Masters from the University of Texas, Arlington both in Computer Science. Prior to joining Ames he was in the doctoral programming Computer Science at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences at New York University. His primary research interests are in Planning, Robotics and Knowledge Representation.

**January 7, 2004:** **Srividhya Rajesh**, BITSian, is among leading fund managers in India. Srividhya Rajesh handles the Select Focus Portfolio, Sundaram Growth, and Sundaram Taxsaver, and Sundaram Mid Cap funds for Sundaram Mutual. An alumnus of BITS Pilani, she has been with Sundaram Mutual since the company's inception and is widely quoted in the Indian press for market insight. Srividhya worked with Kotak Mahindra for two years prior to joining Sundaram Mutual.

**January 1, 2004:** Amkette is staying ahead of the herd by moving into high-end computer peripherals such as LCD screens and wireless keyboards. "We were very clear from the beginning that the business model would be to work on carefully identified niches," says **Rajiv Bapna**, the BITSian MD of Amkette. Rajiv completed his BE from IIT Delhi and then came to Pilani for higher studies.

**January 1, 2004:** **R.K.Kaul** ('71) is head of DSCL Energy (Shriram Goup) that has been named the best Energy Services Company two years in a row by the Petroleum Conservation and Research Association(PCRA). A tennis champion at Pilani for three years, he has given the proposal to BITS Pilani, which could save upto Rs. 1 crore a year.

**December 15, 2003:** Magma Launches "IC Excellence" Initiative in India; Partners With BITS Pilani. Magma Design Automation Inc. (Nasdaq:LAVA) one of the world's leading providers of chip design solutions, today announced the launch of its "IC Excellence" initiative in India. As part of this initiative, Magma will donate IC design software to five leading engineering institutions including BITS Pilani, launch an IC Physical Design PG Diploma course with leading VLSI training institutions in India. Magma Design has won many international accolades and was started by an Indian, Rajeve Madhavan, who is currently CEO. This initiative was led by **Raj Khare**, CEO Broadcom

India, **Vinod Agarwal**, Chairman, Logicvision and other BITSIANS.



**December 11, 2003:** **Shivan Subramaniam**, FM Global CEO was profiled in the Economist. FM Global has \$4 billion in revenues. IN A new, \$78m research facility in Rhode Island, FM Global routinely blows up, batters and burns all sorts of materials and structures. It is distinguished as being one of the largest facilities in the world that can do a controlled fire. The company is one of the handful that dominate the market for insuring large industrial and commercial property. Its penchant for testing things to destruction is a sign of its unusual approach to underwriting risks, based on preventing losses rather than on minute analysis of probabilities. Indeed, it employs 1,400 engineers, more than all its competitors together, and incredibly, has no actuaries.

Barring a disaster, FM Global is likely to conclude a second year with a combined ratio (operating costs and claims losses divided by premiums) of only 70%. For almost 20 years, most property-and-casualty insurers have put up with combined ratios of more than 100% and tried to bridge the gap by investing premiums. A ratio of 90% is regarded as heroic. Anything less verges on being too good to be true.

However, FM Global's peculiar approach to underwriting may well have helped too. Its army of engineers evaluates clients and pushes them to make their buildings safer, on the premise that most losses are avoidable. This strategy of emphasising loss prevention rather than statistical



analysis stems from the company's origins. A truly original approach.

**December 8, 2003:** Amit Thakral, ('97 Chemical) received the Infosys Excellence awards, given for his work with the Hinjewadi Foundation, an organization working for upliftment of society, especially the poorer sections. Amit is one of the core member of the foundation.

**November 30, 2003:** BITSian is the editor of a book titled "India in the global software industry" - an examination of India's IT industry. **Anthony P. D'Costa**, a graduate of BITS, Pilani (1975-80) is an Associate Professor of Comparative

become internationally competitive in the IT industry, this book also offers an avenue for India to tackle the myriad economic problems of the country.

**October 2, 2003:** Krishna Vavilala is Chairman of Mahatma Gandhi Statue Project in Houston. 1960 BITS, Pilani graduate Krishna S. Vavilala, who was featured in the inaugural issue of Sandpaper in May, 2003 was elected Chairman for the Mahatma Gandhi Statue Project in Houston. The attached picture shows Mr. Krishna S. Vavilala addressing the Press during Mayor's Press Conference in City Hall. Standing behind are Houston's Mayor Lee P Brown (Center Right) and the Consul General of India, Hon. S.R. Tayal

inaugurated by Mayor Brown in December 2003.

**October 2, 2003:** BITS cracks the first round of BBC University Challenge on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was a splendid performance by 4 BITSians at the BBC University Challenge - BITS scored 110 points versus 55 points scored by Sir M Viswawaraya Institute of Technology. At the start BITS was 25 points behind, but the team came back with a knock out punch for a COOOL win !!

**September 8, 2003:** BITSAA.org is subject of a Rediff article on online student networks. Writing about alumni networks, Rediff article mentions the use of BITSAA.org for networking, for fundraising and for project management.



International Development at the University of Washington, Tacoma and is affiliated with the University's South Asia and International Studies Programs in Seattle. By showing how India can

(Center Left). Ground breaking by Mayor Lee P Brown was on October 2, 2003 in Houston's centrally located Hermann Park, which is frequented by millions of tourists every year. The statue will be installed and

BITSAA.org has quickly established itself as a leading alumni web-site that has successfully brought together BITSians from BITSAA's 30 global chapters under the same tent. . .